

2014

# Medical Ethnography--Making Meaning that Matters (What it is and What it is Not)

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## Recommended Citation

Hermanns, Melinda, "Medical Ethnography--Making Meaning that Matters (What it is and What it is Not)" (2014). *Nursing Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 11.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10950/415>

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# **The Beauty of Ethnography**

**Presented by:**

**Melinda Hermanns, PhD, RN, BC, CNE**

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# Ethnography is...

- Study of people and their behaviors





# The study of "other" or "primitive" or "exotic" cultures



## Myth

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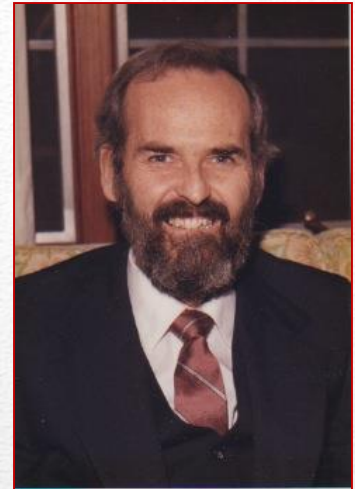
- Humans: past and present
- Culture
- Acquired knowledge: interpret experiences and generate social experience
- Ethos (often tacit)
- Their point of view – example of groups:
  - community, village, neighborhood,
  - organization, a work unit, network or group...**that shares a common experience** (*i.e.*, living with a chronic condition or medical experience)

# What is Ethnography

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## Spradley, 1979



- Culture is the way people make meaning of their experiences and operate in everyday life.
- Collective cognitive constructions that shape beliefs/attitudes and underlie behavior

# Ethnography

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# FIELD EXPERIENCE

## Participant Observation

Role	Description	Use
Observer	Researcher is physically and psychological absent	Inappropriate for ethnographic study; may be used for other forms of qualitative research
Participant-Observer	Researcher creates role for the purpose of study	Typical role in ethnographic study
Interviewer	Establishes role with each person interviewed	Primarily used in ethnographic interview studies

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Source: McMillan and Schumacher



- On-site observation
- Prolonged data collection
- Participants' constructed realities
- Corroboration of field observations
- Salient observations
- Recording observations
- The process is like a funnel



# Participant Observation

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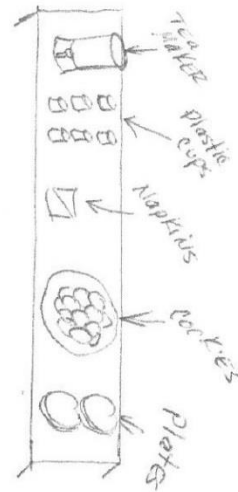
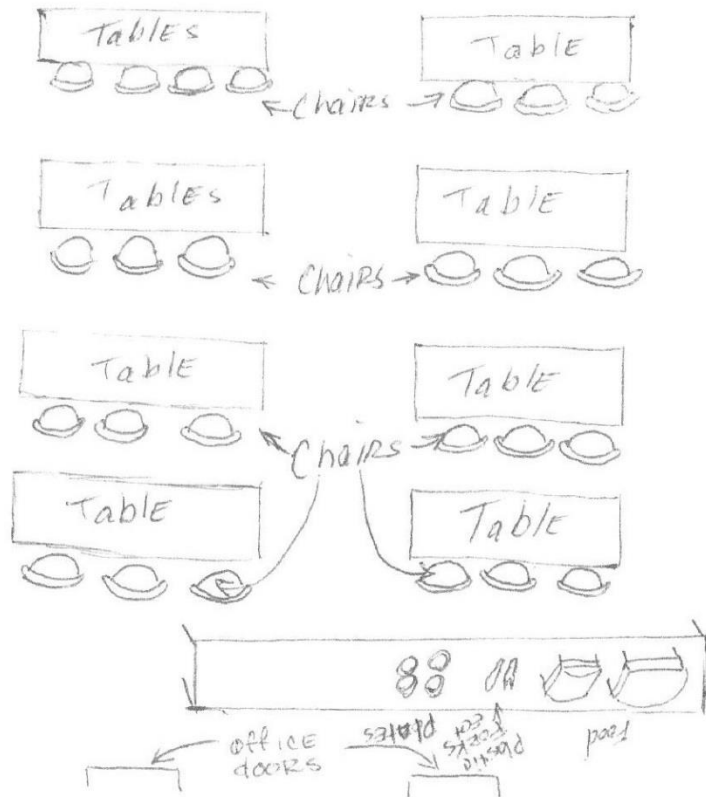
Podium

SCREEN

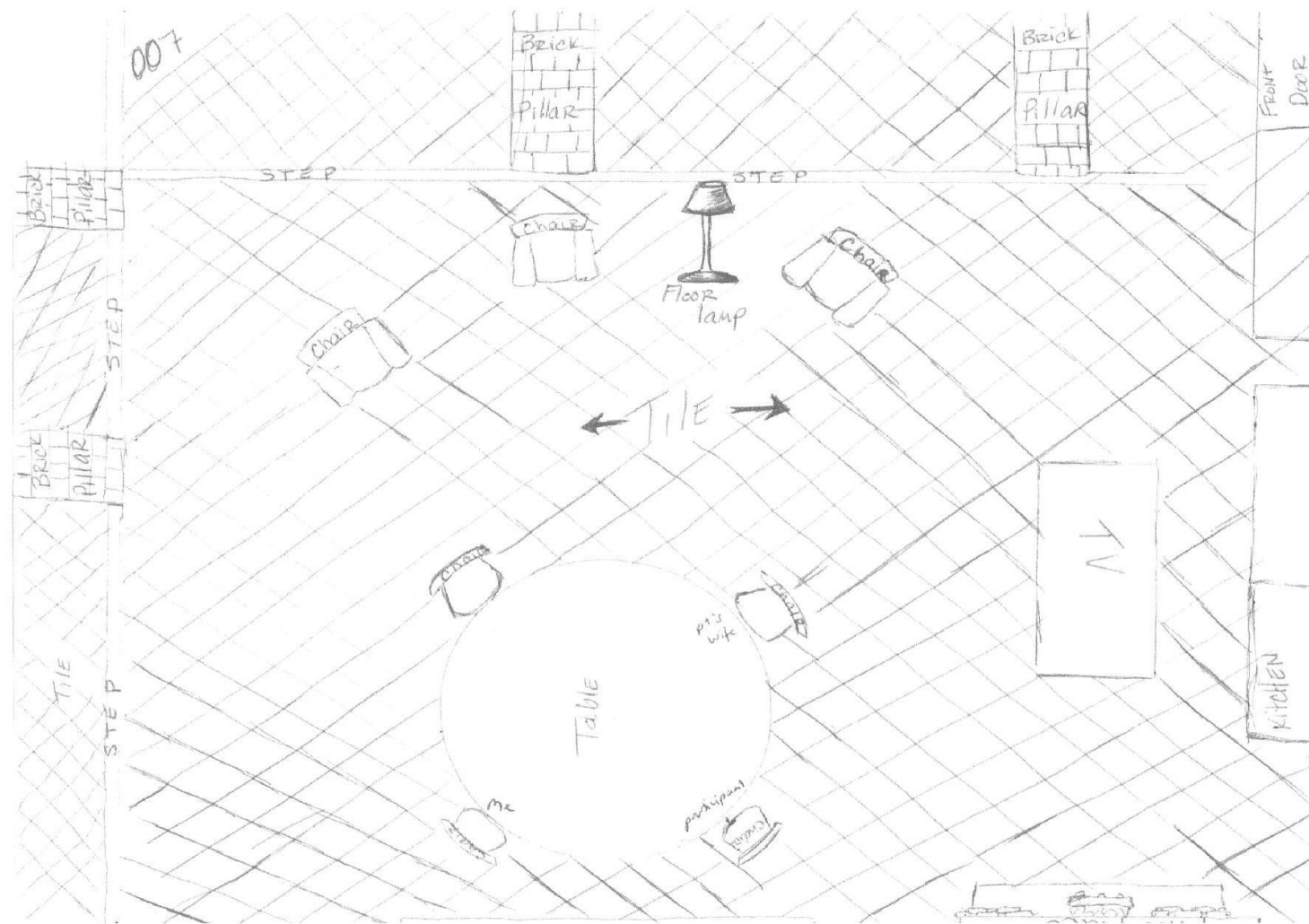
RESTROOM

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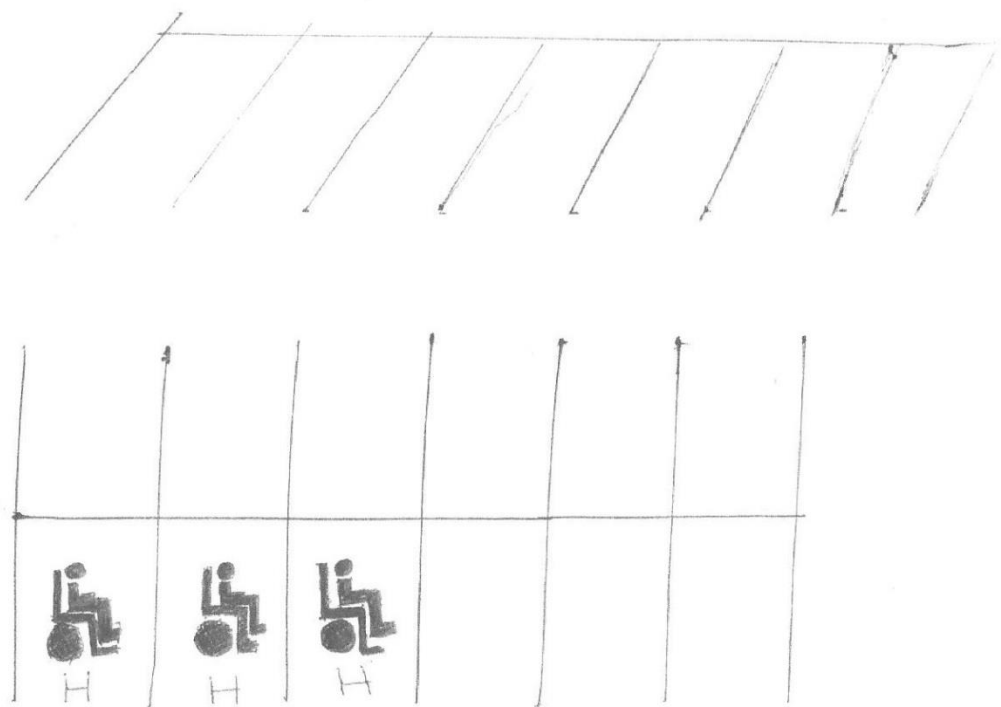
Doorway



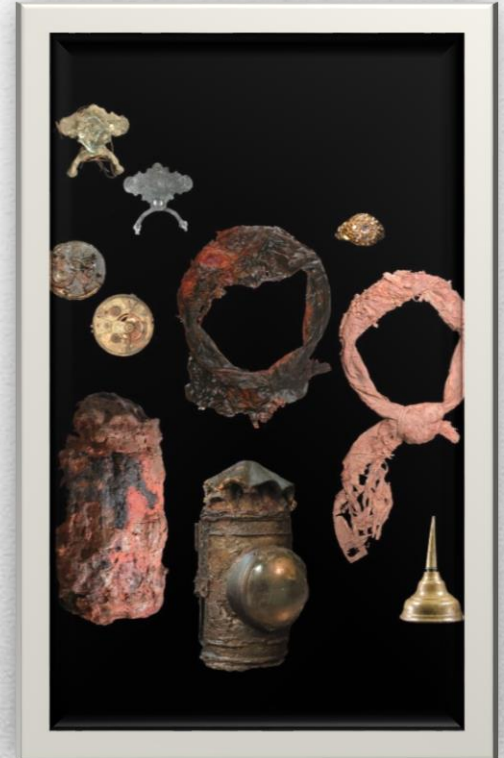
Parkinson's of East Texas  
Support Group







# Artifacts





### Old Man Time

I was young once in my life  
Full of wonder about tomorrow  
Will I marry and have children  
What's he doing at this very moment?

I've had my joys  
I have seen gods, had trouble and strife  
Places to go, things to do, many a dream  
Pimping and styling, keeping cop with order

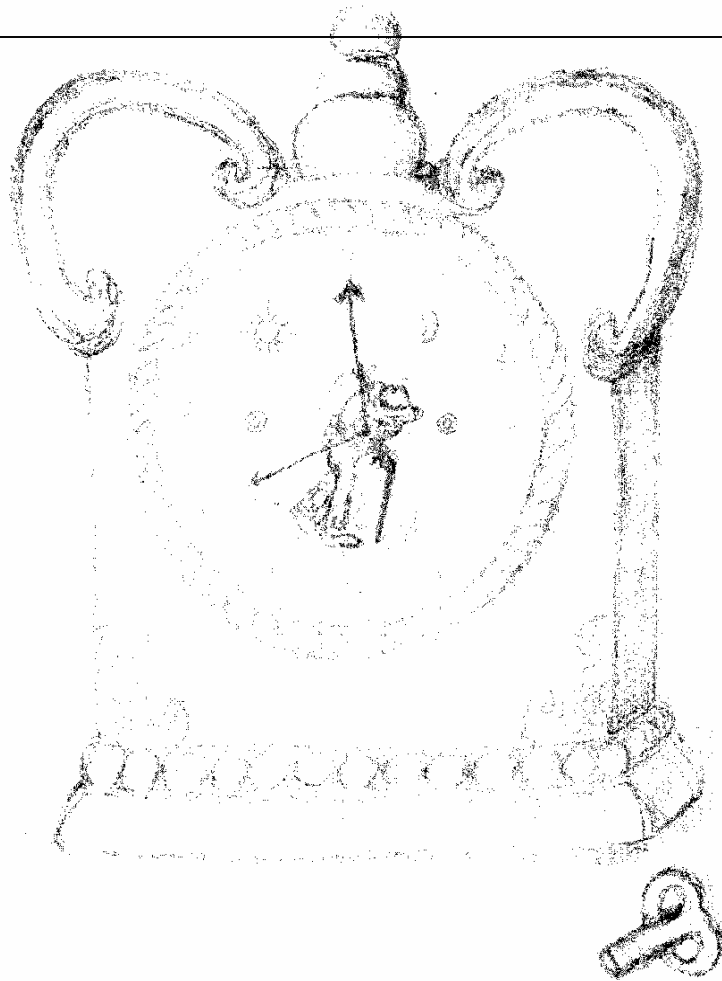
Now that's an older and married  
Where he turn you?

My child is grown and gone on his own  
Will grandchildren who make men they  
Will laughter that only children make

My young was cut short as my pathing of life  
A storm called cancer on that dreary day  
I managed to go through the heavy waves  
Thought only for a little while, then I was  
back on my journey of life.

Many years have come and gone  
Now I resemble Old MAN Time in his clock  
No choice but to march on

## **“Old Man in the Clock”**







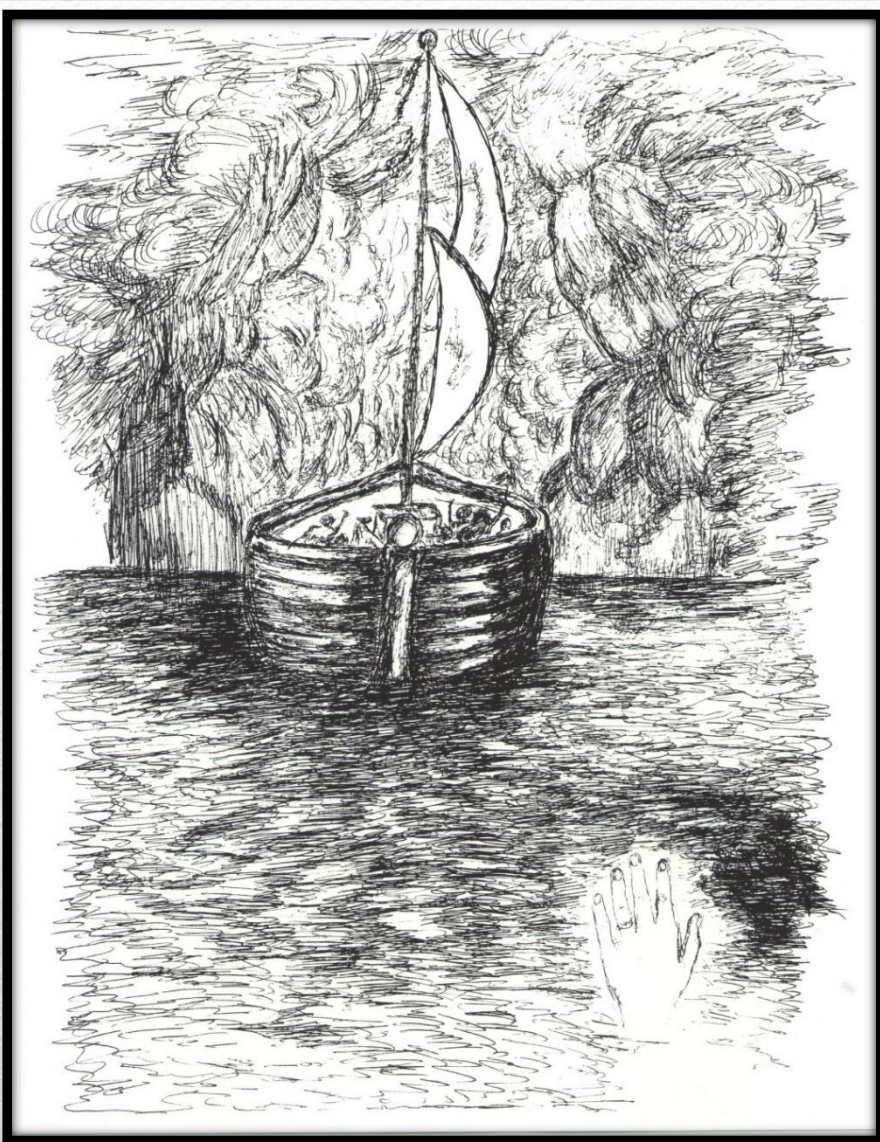
man at  
table



two  
men









# Thank You!



**Questions?**

**Comments?**

